

Arts Participation Initiative Gets Under Way

The Lila Wallace-Readers Digest Fund is sponsoring an initiative to explore arts participation in a new way. Washington's project focuses on underserved communities.

What does "underserved" mean? And how does that term apply to the broad range of arts participants in our state? And how do we better serve those who do not enjoy culturally relevant or economical access to arts experiences?

The Washington State Arts Commission now has a prime opportunity to identify and support appropriate tools to increase arts participation for underserved audiences. In the past year, WSAC began preparations to undertake the Arts Participation Initiative, a new five-year project sponsored by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds. Washington was invited to apply to the new State Arts Program of the

The Wallace Fund has established a website for anyone dedicated to the arts and culture, who wish to share or gain better insight into successful ways to build and enhance arts participation in our communities.

Visit
www.arts4allpeople.org

Wallace Funds and was one of only 13 states to receive funding under the program. WSAC received \$500,000 for staffing, partner subgrants, documentation, evaluation, training meetings and travel.

The WSAC project will specifically look at the ethnic, low income, rural and disabled communities in our state, and organizations in those communities that provide arts services. We will identify barriers to arts participation and aim to strengthen the continuum from visitation to active participation in the arts projects within the given communities. Additional funding of \$20,000 from the Challenge American program of the National Endowment for the arts will be added to the project also.

Barriers to arts participation in these
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The Washington State Arts Commission cultivates a thriving environment for creative expression and appreciation of the arts for the benefit of all.

The Pliant Transformation of Art

Kris Tucker
WSAC Executive Director



Two years ago this spring, WSAC was completing the planning process we called ***Planning on the Arts***. Within about eight weeks, this meeting marathon took me to 20 communities across the state, where more than 1,000 constituents shared ideas, insights, perspectives and concerns. A few months later, we published ***The Arts Work for Washington***, a strategic plan document that has been widely distributed and highly effective. We called it an outrageous ambition: a five year plan for ensuring that the arts strengthen communities across the state, impact education, reflect Washington's cultural diversity and are accessible to all residents.

As a strategic planning process, *Planning on the Arts* launched a new way for us to involve constituents in developing a plan: more participatory and open; considering state priorities and community needs; visionary yet specific. The document itself was designed to include useful information (quotes and statistics) as well as the strategies for moving forward. Those strategies were ambitious, and we needed significant increases in funding for implementation.

I'm convinced that it's a good plan and the result of a great planning process. Yet it's built on assumptions that may not still be true. The boom of the 1990s ended with the millennium. The past year has brought more trauma than we could have envisioned. And this year's strains on the state budget put us even farther behind: instead of a budget increase, we were grateful to lose only three percent of our state funds for the next fiscal year.

Even so, planning for the arts is more important now than ever. These are chaotic times: things will be different as a result of the chaos we are now experiencing. If we see the arts as the creative expression of human experience, we can expect that

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Community Meetings

Two years after planning for the arts, we need your help in looking anew at our strategic plan in the light of current realities. What's been done? What's changed? What's next?

I hope you'll plan to attend one of three community forums this spring, to provide meaningful feedback and fresh vision. Forums will be facilitated by Bill Bulick, former Executive Director of the Regional Arts & Culture Council, Portland. Forums are free and open to the public; no registration is required. Directions are available on our website at www.arts.wa.gov. If you can't attend, please visit our website in May to participate online.

Washington Cultural Congress
Maple Hall, LaConner
April 29, 8:15 - 9:30 AM

Bellevue, Music Works NW
14360 SE Eastgate Way, Suite 102
May 15, 6:30-9 PM

Spokane, Museum of Arts & Culture
2316 West First Avenue
May 28, 6:30-9 PM

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GOOD
NEWS

Artists Sought for Public Art Program

WSAC’s Art in Public Places Program announces the biannual opening of the Artists Resource Bank (ARB) - the artist registry for the state art collection. The program welcomes artists to apply who have existing work available for direct purchase or would like to be eligible for commissions to create new work. The deadline for the open regional competition is June 20, 2002. Prospectus and application forms will be available online at www.arts.wa.gov beginning May 1.

Comments Requested

WSAC is applying for a Hazard Mitigation Grant through the state Emergency Management Division. This grant will fund the purchase and distribution of earthquake safety fasteners to state agencies, universities, colleges and public schools that house two-dimensional artwork in the state’s art collection. We welcome public comment about this application; please contact Lorin Doyle at (360) 586-2420 or lorind@arts.wa.gov.

Heritage Award Exhibit Continues

The traveling exhibit showcasing the recipients of the Governor’s Heritage Awards, and their contributions to our state over the past 12 years, continues its voyage around Washington. The final three months of the touring schedule bring the exhibit to Kirkland, Anacortes and Davenport (see calendar below for locations.)

Early Notice of Grant Opportunity

If you’ve been thinking of applying to WSAC’s Project Support Program, you still have plenty of time to prepare for the Round #2 deadline on October 11 (postmark deadline). This program provides matching funds of \$1,000 to \$4,000 for small arts organizations and community service groups for specific public arts events. For more information, visit www.arts.wa.gov and click on “Grants to Organizations” or call (360) 753-3858.

Pesky Reports Serve a Purpose

Every recipient of WSAC’s Institutional Support, Organizational Support, Project Support, and Cooperative Partnership grants must submit a final report to the Awards Program no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 13, 2002. Grant recipients that do not submit a final report by the deadline will have a 10 percent penalty deducted from their next awarded grant from the Awards Program. The report is available as an Excel 5.0 workbook in PC format on our website at www.arts.wa.gov (Click on “Grants to Organizations”). Or contact Barbara Jacobson for an email or hard copy version at (360) 753-3858 or barbaraj@arts.wa.gov.

Why is this good news? By submitting your final report, you are contributing to a body of research at the state and national levels that supports funding for the arts. Every answer you provide helps detail who is benefiting from the arts and how healthy arts organizations are currently. Thank you for your help in collecting this important data.

Capital Project Grant Applications Due

Washington state’s Building for the Arts Program is now accepting applications for the 2003-2005 grant cycle. A total of \$4 million is available to non-profit arts and cultural organizations to support arts-related capital projects. The grants defray up to 20 percent of eligible capital costs of new facilities or major facility improvements. Applications are due May 3, 2002. To receive an application form, contact Laurie Dschaak at the Office of Community Development: lauried@cted.wa.gov or (360) 725-3020.

Nominate For National Medal of Arts

Public nominations are being accepted for the 2002 National Medal of Arts, which is awarded by the president to individuals or groups. The deadline for nominations is May 15, 2002. Nominations may be submitted online or by fax (not by mail). For more information and a nomination form, go to the National Endowment for the Arts’ website at www.nea.gov.

What was any art but a mould in which to imprison for a moment the shining elusive element which is life itself—life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose.

Willa Cather,
1873-1947

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calendar

April
28 Community Meeting in LaConner

May
Governor’s Heritage Award Exhibition at Kirkland Arts Center

15 Community Meeting in Bellevue
16 WSAC Commission Meeting, Mt. Vernon, 10 am - 3:30 p.m., Skagit Valley College
28 Community Meeting in Spokane

June
Governor’s Heritage Award Exhibition at The Depot Arts Center, Anacortes

20 Artists Resource Bank applications due to Public Art Program

July
Governor’s Heritage Award Exhibition at Lincoln County Historical Society Museum, Davenport

The Pliant Transformation of Art, cont. from page 1

the arts have something unique and essential to offer. I’m sure that my work will change in the years ahead, beyond what I can imagine – and I’m convinced that the arts will continue to help a chaotic and changing world deal with uncertainty, complexity, diversity and meaning.

In the long run, our strategic plan won’t best be measured by how well we meet the benchmarks but on how the plan positions us for facing things we didn’t see coming. No, I’m not backing off the strategies: we must remain committed to grants, arts education, equity and diversity. In addition, our plan must also

position us to seize new opportunities, reposition our resources, and respond to new opportunities – and to love what we do.

In the words of northwest poet Kim Stafford:
*Be ready to love the pliant transformation of art
as you love water, light, air, our children.**

Keep in touch. kt

*(From Stafford’s poem, There Was A Time; read it at www.racc.org/responsePOEM.html).

Arts Participation Initiative Gets Under Way, cont. from page 1

key communities might include the cost of tickets, lack of childcare, language barriers, cultural differences, long distances to travel, lack of performance space, lack of handicapped accessibility or deaf translation, or misunderstanding between generations within these communities. Organizational barriers to better arts service might include lack of staff training or funds to pay staff.

WSAC hired Arts Project Manager Mayumi Tsutakawa in January, 2002, to design and implement the five-year project. She has been conducting research and interviews with advisors and representatives of underserved communities in various parts of the state in order to draft a project plan. The plan will include criteria, guidelines, application procedures, budget and a program for involvement of all partners involved in the Arts Participation Initiative. The Washington State Arts Commission probably will consider the final guidelines at its August 2002 meeting.

At this early stage, it is projected that about six grantee partners representing underserved communities will each receive \$20,000 to \$30,000 in a three-year period. A panel will consider the applications and recommend finalists. The Commission will approve the final selections.

These grantee partners will take part in annual convenings to be held in various parts of the state. The partners will help to design these three annual training workshops that will provide arts management skills as well as key opportunities to share art forms and learn about each other’s communities. A possible feature of the training will be the provision of equipment and training to photograph, document and share the six projects using new technology.

- The long-range goals of the Arts Participation Initiative include:
- investment in, and strengthening of, arts organizations in underserved communities
 - qualitative and quantitative improvements in arts participation
 - building sustainability of arts projects in underserved communities
 - documenting and sharing, both regionally and nationally, the model projects
 - providing tools for Washington State to continue support for projects in underserved communities after this five year period

The new WSAC project will draw upon theoretical constructs of audience participation developed by the RAND Corporation, under contract with the Wallace Funds. The RAND study identified three levels of participation: audience member, arts participant and arts supporter. Further, the study looked at three levels of developing participation as deepening, broadening and diversifying. The RAND consultants will study the state arts grantees and all their partner subgrantees during this five-year process.

National convenings will be important during the five-year project. Representatives of each state project will travel to annual Wallace meetings of grantee partners in order to share information and present their model projects.

For more information, write to Mayumi Tsutakawa at mayumit@arts.wa.gov or call her at 360-586-1266.

SMART LINKS

Centrum Arts and Creative Education, based in Port Townsend, has events and workshops every month that bring together gifted instructors and avid learners. Check out upcoming opportunities at: www.centrum.org

The Arts Network of Washington State offers a monthly electronic bulletin with listings for artists and organizations: www.artsnet@plu.edu

Americans for the Arts has collected community arts responses—across the country and around the world—to the tragedies of September 11 and its aftermath and has posted the information online : www.americansforthearts.org/arts_healing_america/

The Budget Landscape:
A Tenuous Hold for State Arts Agencies

In its annual survey of state arts agency funding, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) found that legislative appropriations fell from \$446.8 million in fiscal year 2001 to \$419.7 million in the current fiscal year. The primary cause for these reductions is the squeeze on state budgets, which are experiencing shrinking revenues and rising expenditures. However, if the decreases to the California and New York state budgets are taken out of the picture, state arts funding remained essentially flat. In Washington state, the state arts budget was reduced three percent (\$86,000) for the next year. We are working to identify efficiencies and cuts to administrative services and programs. To date, these efforts include reductions in travel, printing, technical assistance, and other program services. In spite of difficult times, we will continue to follow the spirit of our strategic plan, maximize available resources, and cultivate a thriving environment for the arts. Some of the examples of how state funds are leveraged in communities are showcased on the back page of this newsletter.

Success Snapshots: Grant Recipients Making An Impact

Appreciating Diverse Cultures

In a special cultural response to September 11th, Northwest Folklife and WSAC’s Folk Arts Program are partnering to bring more information about the cultural traditions of Islam and the Near East into Washington state schools. The program features the Iranian music ensemble, Shourangeez – The Creators of Joy – in a lively performance of Persian folk and



classical music and dance, played on traditional instruments. The group also offers classroom presentations on Iranian cultural and religious diversity and history, and makes themselves available for

question and answer periods. The program is available at a reduced fee in the spring and fall of 2002. For more information, contact Claire Jones, Northwest Folklife Education at (206) 684-7281 or education@nwfolklife.org.

Music Event Reaches Thousands

Lake Chelan Bach Fest received a \$2,000 grant from our Project Support Program last year that was matched by a Challenge America grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Bach Fest provides access to live classical music for a diverse population, drawing more than 2,500 people from three rural counties in central Washington. Held in July, a series of 17 concerts were presented along with an exhibit of paintings and sculptures by Washington artist Simon Kogan. Local young musicians were invited to participate in the chorus and play with the orchestra. For this year’s festival schedule, visit www.bachfest.org.



Photo by Sue Ranney.

A student from Hamilton International Middle School displays a woodcut he created while working with artist Joshua Okrent.

Integrating Arts in the Classroom

Students at Hamilton International Middle School in Seattle can now express themselves through Magic Realism, poetry, woodcuts and printmaking in the Spanish style after completing a comprehensive program held last winter. While learning Spanish vocabulary in order to create short poems about everyday life and familiar animals, Spanish language students in exchange teacher Ms. Maribel Fernandez’s class also learned various art forms from visiting artists. Magic Realism is a complex genre used by many Latin American writers to exaggerate a familiar object to make it seem magical. Students also practiced “writing in code,” as do some Magic Realist writers, to communicate about political situations they cannot comment on directly. Completed poems were combined with the prints into a final chapbook; each student received a copy of their collective work. The Hamilton project is part of a larger consortium led by Seattle International Children’s Festival and supported by the Washington State Arts Commission through an Arts in Education Community Consortium Grant.

Funding for the Washington State Arts Commission and its programs is provided by the state of Washington and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS



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